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Evaluation

Implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation of the UNDP contribution to poverty reduction

I. Introduction

1. In 2013, the Independent Evaluation Office published an evaluation of UNDP contributions to poverty reduction between 2000 and 2013. The evaluation focused on the evolving role of UNDP in reducing multidimensional poverty in line with its overall mission and across its areas of intervention. The evaluation, along with a management response, was presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session 2013. This report further documents UNDP progress in implementing the recommendations of the poverty evaluation, as requested in decision 2013/2.

2. The report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, and provides an overview of UNDP efforts to address them. Annex 1 provides an updated management response, including actions taken to address each recommendation. Annex 2 details the seven outcomes and selected outputs of the UNDP strategic plan and how they contribute to the overall vision of poverty eradication, with illustrative country examples. Annex 3 lists knowledge products pertaining to UNDP work on poverty reduction.

II. Poverty evaluation findings and recommendations

3. The findings of the evaluation recognized the important contributions made by UNDP to poverty reduction in many areas, including in embedding a multidimensional perspective of poverty across national and global debates; creating enabling environments to help governments develop pro-poor policies; developing local capacities for pro-poor policymaking; taking flexible approaches to poverty reduction depending on national contexts; and increasing the sustainability of poverty reduction.

4. The evaluation also found some gaps. Notably, it recognized that efforts to improve the enabling environment for poverty reduction have not always led to improved pro-poor policy-making. Addressing this gap, the evaluation recommends strengthening links with civil society, academia and other national stakeholders to improve UNDP influence on pro-poor policymaking (**recommendation 1**). The evaluation also found that some UNDP poverty reduction activities would benefit from additional measures to incorporate pro-poor biases into programme design,

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instead of relying on trickle-down processes. It recommended that all programmes and projects undertaken by UNDP be designed with an explicit pro-poor bias, ensuring that the poor benefit disproportionately (**recommendation 2**). The evaluation identified great potential in the exploitation of synergies between UNDP work in the areas of governance, energy and environment, and crisis prevention and recovery, and UNDP's poverty reduction work. It recommended strengthening cross-thematic links at the country level, including through partnerships with United Nations and other organizations (**recommendation 3**). Finally, the evaluation noted some limitations in the capacity of UNDP to measure the impact of its poverty reduction activities in terms of changes in the welfare of people. In line with those findings, it recommended improving performance evaluations to ensure better scaling-up of successful downstream initiatives and better informed upstream policy advice for poverty reduction (**recommendation 4**).

III. Overview of the UNDP response to poverty evaluation

The strategic plan, 2014-2017

5. The UNDP strategic plan, 2014-2017, is the guiding framework for the UNDP response to the evaluation. The plan was informed by the findings of the poverty evaluation, complementary evaluations, the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, Millennium Development Goals experiences, and consultations with stakeholders. The central vision of the strategic plan is "to help countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion". This means that all UNDP policy advice, technical support, advocacy, and programming must be aimed at the end result of eradicating poverty and inequalities and achieving inclusion.

6. The seven outcomes of the strategic plan, discussed in detail in annex 2, are derived from a theory of change that recognizes the need to address the diverse and underlying drivers of multidimensional poverty within local contexts. The theory of change underscores, in alignment with **recommendation 4** of the evaluation, that to maximize poverty reduction, synergies within and across interlinked objectives must be better understood and leveraged. It recognizes that poverty can only be reduced where cross-cutting, coherent initiatives address vulnerabilities, reduce the risks of setback, break patterns of discrimination, and enable women and men to benefit from economic growth. UNDP has exceeded the milestones for 32 of its 38 strategic plan outputs for outcomes linked to reducing poverty.

7. The theory of change contains several closely related assumptions, including the need to ensure shared growth; improve access to basic services and social protection; improve access to natural resources and energy; improve opportunities to build capabilities, generate employment and sustain livelihoods; address discrimination in all its forms (for example, based on gender, age, ethnicity, or HIV-AIDS status); better manage natural resources and linked factors concerning consumption, production, climate change and the poverty-environment nexus; ensure inclusive and accountable governance; manage risk to secure resilient development; and foster understanding of the evolving impact of new technologies on societies.

8. The theory of change also informs measures taken by UNDP to implement the strategic plan in line with its poverty eradication vision. Those include: redesigning the main areas of UNDP work; revitalizing approaches to South-South and triangular cooperation, partnerships and coordination; and transforming institutional effectiveness, including through its Integrated Results and Resources Framework. They also include a reorganization of UNDP bureaus and offices. In October 2014, UNDP launched the Bureau for Programme and Policy Support, which houses all policy and programme support services.[1] All of these measures aim to maximize the impact of UNDP on poverty reduction.

[1] The Bureau for Programme and Policy Support oversees four closely linked clusters on sustainable development, climate change and disaster risk reduction, governance and peacebuilding, and gender.

9. The UNDP strategic plan foresaw and includes many of the main of elements of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its design and theory of change draws on lessons learned through efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and has positioned UNDP well to advance the multidimensional poverty in the context of the sustainable development goals.

Addressing the four recommendations of the evaluation

10. Strengthening links with civil society, academia and national stakeholders that represent the needs of those left behind, enhances UNDP effectiveness in influencing pro-poor policymaking by national governments. To strengthen those links, in accordance with Millennium Development Goals of the evaluation, UNDP has instituted requirements for all programmes and projects to engage with civil society and academia, underpinned by the UNDP strategy on civil society and civic engagement, 2012. In the context of the Millennium Development Goals, a critical component of the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework was the systematic engagement of civil society to identify and implement solutions to lagging targets, such as poverty reduction, maternal health, and nutrition. Under the sustainable development goals, such efforts will continue and be stepped up.

11. To incorporate explicit pro-poor biases into programme design, in accordance with **recommendation 2**, UNDP has made poverty eradication its vision and established systems linking all UNDP programmes and projects to this vision. The quality standards and assurance and peer-review systems adopted in 2014 have led to a vigorous and accountable alignment of all programmes and projects to the seven outcomes of the strategic plan. Evidence-based tools, methodologies and guidelines have been developed in all thematic areas to enable approaches that maximize the impact on poverty reduction.

12. The 2030 Agenda, the strategic plan, the Integrated Results and Resources Framework, and quality standards, all enable and incentivize cross-cutting approaches to poverty reduction. Strengthening cross-thematic links at the country level, pursuant to recommendation 3, is underlined in the theory of change of the strategic plan, which calls for multi-faceted approaches to poverty reduction.[2] The UNDP reorganization has desegregated work silos and ensured cross-sectoral support at the country level. For example, UNDP increasingly supports countries in carrying out integrated crisis recovery and prevention to mitigate the negative impacts of crises on the poor – embedding support for livelihoods and strengthening local governance and environmental outcomes. The Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework provided an effective platform for collaborating with other United Nations organizations on multidimensional aspects of poverty, such as with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme on hunger and food security (in the Central African Republic, Niger, and Togo), with UNFPA and the World Health Organization on the maternal mortality rate (in Ghana and Uganda), and with the International Labour Organization on employment (in Costa Rica).

13. Finally, UNDP has made important strides in improving its capacity to assess and measure the impact of its poverty reduction activities, and learn lessons for scaling-up and feeding into upstream policy advice relevant to poverty reduction, pursuant to **recommendation 4**. The Integrated Results and Resources Framework and corresponding quality assurance standards focus the attention of staff on achieving measurable quantitative and qualitative results and value for money. UNDP quality standards require all programmes and projects, including country programme documents, to elaborate a theory of change on how country-level efforts will reduce poverty. Additionally, staff are required to assess the degree to which the theory of change holds true in practice and adapt on-the-ground initiatives to maximize poverty reduction. Targeted training and human resources measures, such as a new learning platform[3], have strengthened country office capacities to monitor, analyse and share experiences, and to learn from practice.

[2] Generating livelihoods that benefit poorest, for example, requires skill-building, an enabling physical infrastructure, stable societies, capable governance, access to a just rule of law, accessible financial assets and services and adequate natural capital.

[3] The Talent Development Centre was launched in 2016.

Annex 1. Updated management response to the four recommendations of the evaluation

Key actions	***Response***
Evaluation recommendation 1. UNDP should forge stronger links with national stakeholders, especially civil society and academia, to ensure that the ideas and lessons it propagates through its flagship documents, such as national human development reports and MDG reports, may influence the national policy agenda.	
Key action 1.1. Include engagement of civil society and academia in knowledge product quality assurance procedures.	UNDP standard operating procedures[4] require external peer review of all global and regional knowledge products, including relevant civil society and academic partners. UNDP engages civil society and academia in the design and validation of country programming and knowledge products, including country programme documents and Millennium Development Goals acceleration action plans.
	The operating framework of the UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee states that members "provide substantive inputs to the development of key UNDP strategies and policies across its areas of focus".
	The forthcoming UNDG guidelines on sustainable development goals reporting suggest specific channels to facilitate civil society involvement in reporting local progress, including face-to-face and electronic platforms.
	Regional and national human development reports continue to be vehicles for local thought-leaders, academic institutions and civil society organizations to engage in national and global debates related to poverty. UNDP focal points are tasked with facilitating civic engagement at every stage of production.
Key action 1.2. Report on partnership and engagement with civil society and academia in results-oriented annual reporting	All UNDP country offices, through the results-oriented annual report, are asked to report on their cooperation with the private sector, civil society organizations and academia. In 2015, 29 per cent of country offices reported cooperation with Southern-based civil society organizations, compared to 12 per cent in 2014. In 2015, cooperation with academic and research institutions increased by 19 per cent.
	According to its Integrated Results and Resources Framework, UNDP strengthened civil society capacities in 21 countries in 2014, supporting their engagement in development- and poverty-related debates, including groups representing women, youth, and other marginalized groups. In 2015, the number jumped to 37 countries, while 32 country offices worked to strengthen the enabling environment for civic engagement. By the end of 2017, UNDP expects to have helped 48 countries strengthen the capacity of civil society to engage meaningfully in pro-poor policy debates and action.
	The Integrated Results and Resources Framework includes an output on establishing frameworks for civic engagement. Country offices, and other parts of UNDP, regularly report on progress against this output. Additionally, to capture the extensive work promoting citizen participation UNDP has proposed including a question on how opportunities for citizen participation are being expanded as a result of UNDP activities (results-oriented annual report, 2016).

[4] https://info.undp.org/global/popp/partnerships/Pages/civil-society.aspx

Key action 1.3. Support countries in developing over 40 'third generation' Millennium Development Goals reports serving as evidence to inform the post-2015 development agenda, with guidance on engaging civil society and academia.	As the Millennium Development Goals score-keeper, UNDP worked with its national partners to facilitate periodic, inclusive reviews on progress towards the Goals. At least one national Millennium Development Goals report was produced by each of the 156 UNDP programme countries. Governments led their production, working with UNDP and United Nations country teams to engage the full range of stakeholders, including from marginalized and vulnerable communities.
	In 2013, a UNDP amendment to the *UNDG guidance note on MDG reporting* recommended that governments consult with stakeholders to mine lessons on their experience in implementing the Goals. The resulting 55 'third-generation' national Millennium Development Goals reports, suggest that the multiple manifestations and underlying causes of poverty were increasingly analysed, better understood and better reflected in Goals-focused initiatives.
	Civic engagement underpinned UNDP efforts to build consensus on the post-2015 global development agenda, particularly to ensure the inclusion of poor and marginalized communities. Global thematic debates brought world-class experts, advocates and think tanks into the conversation; and the global *My World* survey allowed the participation of over 10 million people.
Evaluation recommendation 2. Programmes and projects undertaken by UNDP should be designed with an explicit pro-poor bias, always trying to add specific elements that would enhance the likelihood that the poor will benefit more than they would through general development interventions.	
Key action 2.1. Develop guidelines and a practical tool kit with project examples of how to design pro-poor programmes in the area of democratic governance, energy and environment, HIV and AIDS, and crisis prevention and recovery.	Explicit guidelines and toolkits have been developed in all UNDP thematic areas (see sample list in annex 3). These publications enable UNDP country offices to maximize the poverty reduction impact of their initiatives. The 2015 UNDP publication *Mainstreaming environment and climate for poverty reduction and sustainable development,* for example, elaborates approaches that have worked to maximize poverty reduction and environmental objectives. UNDP prospectuses and policy briefs released in 2015 also elaborate on the UNDP integrated approach towards the eradication of poverty.
Key action 2.2a. Ensure designated capacity in the country offices, regional service centres and at headquarters to advise and support other practices to design, monitor, implement and evaluate programmes with explicit pro-poor bias.	In March 2016, the UNDP project document template was revised to require a description of *"the development challenge the project seeks to address, provide evidence of how it relates to national/ regional/global development priorities – for women and men, marginalized and excluded groups – and therefore, explain why it is important for reducing poverty, curbing inequality and exclusion".* This requires all projects to elaborate on how they intend to reduce poverty, and incentivize staff to design projects, in consultation with policy advisors, with specific poverty reduction targets and clear theories of change, from the outset.
	The reorganization of UNDP in 2014 sought in part to avoid compartmentalizing poverty reduction (highlighted by the evaluation), by organizing staff in thematically integrated practices. All practices are responsible for delivering long- and short-term poverty reduction results – by building more peaceful, just and cohesive societies; working to safeguard and restore essential ecosystems important to the welfare of the poor; strengthening governance and accountability; generating livelihoods; and laying the ground for productive, inclusive economies.

Key action 2.2b. Poverty teams in crisis countries and in regional service centres acquire skills on UNDP programming in crisis response, with a focus on livelihoods and economic recovery programming, including linkages with other practice areas such as governance and conflict prevention.	In 2013, staff from poverty and crisis prevention and recovery units from 33 countries were trained to assess and deliver economic recovery and livelihoods – including through emergency employment, enterprise recovery, community infrastructure rehabilitation, debris management and local government support (participatory planning). In 2014, 2015, and 2016, similar such trainings were held for staff with diverse expertise – involved in UNDP crisis-response ('SURGE'). In 2015 over 100 colleagues were trained in immediate post-crisis livelihoods generation – including through debris management, municipal solid waste management, infrastructure rehabilitation, enterprise recovery, and cash-based interventions. A global platform and community of practice facilitates ongoing exchange and learning on economic recovery and livelihoods in both (post-) crisis and non-crisis contexts among UNDP staff, at all levels and in all thematic areas.
Key action 2.3. Include pro-poor and environmental sustainability activities among the criteria in the project appraisal committee checklist.	In 2015 UNDP adopted social and environmental standards for all projects and programmes, aligned with the integrated objectives in 2030 Agenda. The standards integrate the gender marker, the capacity development tracker, environmental standards, sustainability, human rights and pro-poor criteria. They require staff to analyse risks and the interlinkages between objectives, elaborating how they will achieve poverty reduction while advancing environmental, gender, crisis prevention, governance and other objectives.
	The criteria for project appraisal requires the inclusion of explicit "strategies to effectively identify, engage and ensure the meaningful participation of targeted groups/geographic areas with a priority focus on the excluded and marginalized". Projects are rated on how well they "prioritize marginalized and excluded populations and engage them in the design of the project – in a way that addresses any underlying causes of exclusion and discrimination", as well as potential social and environmental risks, opportunities and adverse impacts.
Key action 2.4. Analyse programmes that crosscut multiple practice areas and contribute to poverty reduction, such as Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework programmes in different thematic areas, to tease out the successful factors and lessons learned.	Country programme documents are required to use evaluations and evidence to identify what has worked and what has not, and apply those lessons to inform programming priorities. Corporate standards for project implementation require staff to regularly assess the theory of change to determine if it holds true in practice, including by considering social and environmental impacts and risks and ensuring that they are successfully managed and monitored.
	The country programme documents criteria require evidence that targeted groups are being systematically identified and engaged – prioritizing the marginalized and excluded. This incentivizes measures to target the poorest, and generates evidence that they benefit from UNDP support – thus directly addressing a concern noted in the evaluation. Reports against this criterion must be reviewed by country-level managers; shortcomings are flagged as requiring a review and management response to improve programming.
	A 2014 evaluation of UNDP contributions to the Millennium Development Goals, highlighted the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework, UNDP-facilitation of lessons learned and its flexible approach to implementation as significant strengths and contributions to achievement of the Goals. A United Nations Chief Executives Board review of Acceleration Framework implementation concluded (noting examples) that it had successfully facilitated the application of lessons learned from practice to achieve results.

Evaluation recommendation 3. UNDP country offices should strengthen efforts to create more effective integration between thematic clusters and stronger partnerships with United Nations organizations, especially in terms of ensuring a sharper focus on non-income dimensions of poverty.	
Key action 3.1a. Continue supporting multi-practice and multi-organization joint initiatives that aim at building synergies to achieve poverty reduction results.	UNDP supported over 60 countries in developing and implementing Millennium Development Goals acceleration action plans on issues related to poverty, including through partnerships with the World Bank.
	With the support of the UNDP-United Nations Environment Programme joint poverty-environment initiative, over 25 countries have poverty and environmental mainstreaming strategies in place.
	Working with the World Bank and the European Union, UNDP has been a key partner in the delivery of post-conflict and post-disaster needs assessments, to mitigate the impact of crises on the poorest. Countries involved have included: Lebanon, Nepal, Nigeria, the Philippines, and Yemen. UNDP is a key partner with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and others on the 'Decent Jobs for Youth' initiative, which aims to ensure policy and country-level joint coordinated action for young women and men, especially the poor and vulnerable. UNDP has partnered with the Peacebuilding Support Office, ILO and the World Bank on the links to employment and peacebuilding to ensure increased policy coherence and evidence-based programming on peacebuilding.
	In 2015, UNDP and its partner organizations developed guidelines to support national partners and stakeholders to effectively implement the sustainable development goals at the subnational level, in particular to empower poor and vulnerable communities.
Key action 3.1b. In at least three crisis countries, UNDP will promote stronger integration between thematic clusters and collaboration with key partners at the country level by: (a) adopting integrated post-disaster and post-conflict country and recovery analyses; and (b) jointly designing and implementing sustainable livelihoods and economic recovery programmes (through the crisis prevention and recovery and poverty reduction clusters).	In crisis countries, UNDP strives to achieve crisis prevention and recovery, poverty reduction and environmental objectives simultaneously, through integrated post-conflict, post-disaster recovery frameworks and programmes. The structure of country offices increasingly reflects this emphasis (post-crisis livelihoods recovery, environment and poverty reduction are housed in a common unit). The quality assurance process of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework includes criteria to ensure that crisis prevention and recovery and poverty reduction are approached as interlinked objectives. UNDP is implementing a number of integrated flagship programmes targeting the poorest and most vulnerable in crisis-affected communities with services involving livelihoods stabilization, basic service delivery, social protection, social cohesion and the rule of law. These include the Yemen Resilience Programme, the Iraq Crisis Response and Resilience Programme, host community support programmes in Jordan and Lebanon in response the Syria Crisis; the Syria Resilience Building Programme; the Nepal and Philippines disaster response and recovery programmes; and the community security and livelihoods stabilization programme in the Central African Republic.
	In 2013, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) entered its 6th tranche, with new guidelines and templates for programmes and projects. UNDP strengthened the guidelines to ensure poverty outcomes across its community-level work. GEF guidelines for community-based work include indicators on the generation of livelihoods for poor and vulnerable people. Djibouti is a good example of GEF efforts to achieve integrated, poverty-reducing outcomes in a post-conflict setting. GEF-supported adaptation measures are addressing water scarcity – a limiting factor for agricultural productivity and livelihood security. Climate resilient agro-pastoral practices, such as using date-palm trees to protect gardens from extreme heat, have been introduced. The sale of resulting agricultural products has diversified incomes. In addition, communities have benefited from more

	secure water infrastructure, including boreholes and solar pumps, increasing water availability and reducing the time spent collecting water.
Key action 3.2. Develop new joint initiatives with United Nations partners as needed to advance the poverty reduction agenda.	The Millennium Development Goals Gap Task Force served as a United Nations-wide platform that successfully advanced achievement of the Goals through its focus on Goal 8 and donor contributions. A similar United Nations-wide structure (the inter-agency task force) has been put in place to coordinate support for implementation of the sustainable development goals. UNDP works with United Nations partners to advance country support – through the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth, new programming in the poverty-environment arena, and replication of good practices in social protection and to promote the adoption of social protection floors.
	A partnership with the World Bank and other United Nations organizations within the rubric of the Chief Executives Board for acceleration of the Millennium Development Goals initiated United Nations system-wide support to help overcome pressing bottlenecks to achievement of the Goals in selected countries. The Partnership for Action on a Green Economy was initiated and formally launched in 2014, with the United Nations Environment Programme, ILO, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research to help advance poverty reduction within a green economy context. In 2015, UNDP and ILO, together with the Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank, initiated a joint project to promote inclusive labour markets in the western Balkans, and in 2016 UNDP initiated a new inter-organization joint initiative on measuring poverty in the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region.
Evaluation recommendation 4. Downstream activities should be undertaken with the strategic objective of contributing to something bigger than what those activities can deliver on their own, by way of learning lessons for scaling up or feeding into upstream policy advice relevant to poverty reduction. For both its staff and its activities, UNDP should incorporate into its system of performance evaluation specific provisions that spell out the means, as well as the incentives, for institutionalized learning, so that lessons learned from successes and failures in each of its activities can feed into everything that UNDP does across portfolios and over time.	
Key action 4.1. Roll out the guidance on scaling-up development programmes for transformational change to over 30 countries, covering all regions.	Guidance for scaling-up and learning from downstream projects and programmes was integrated into the country programming guidelines and template. In keeping with the UNDP quality standards and assurance processes, all country programme documents are required to demonstrate how they used evidence from evaluations, studies and lessons from practice regarding what worked, and what did not, to inform programming priorities and design.
	Theories of change must be elaborated in all projects and programmes, including to explain how downstream initiatives are designed, from the outset, to trigger transformative or broad-based change, creating a path for scaled-up poverty reduction. UNDP quality standards for implementation require ongoing assessment and monitoring of the degree to which theories of change holds true in practice, and adapt implementation on the ground to maximize learning and keep the initiative on track so as to achieve scaled-up impact.

Key action 4.2. Launch and disseminate an e-learning platform on scaling-up, with practical guidance and relevant examples from all practices	In 2016, UNDP launched a new learning system – the Talent Development Centre – which hosts a number of learning instruments, including web-based courses, certification programmes, and an online learning library with materials relevant to cross-thematic poverty approaches. It also connects peers through social learning and collaborative tools linked to the UNDP 'Yammer'.
	In 2016, UNDP introduced the Sustainable Pathways Network with the aim of fostering discussion among colleagues on sustainable development, including the eradication of poverty in all its forms as they relate to country work. The network allows members to post queries, and provides a space for sharing news, innovative good practices, lessons learned, and relevant information on events and publications. A knowledge management gateway was introduced in the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region in 2016, offering an e-learning, information management and collaboration/networking platform; the Regional Bureau for Africa is preparing to follow this approach with the launch of its own knowledge gateway.
Key action 4.3. Design and implement incentives linked with resource allocation and result recognition to support country office learning culture.	Organization-wide, integrated results-based work planning is improving alignment with strategic plan outcomes and strengthening accountability for poverty reduction results. The annual business plan of UNDP – tied to strategic plan outcomes and outputs – is used to inform and help determine the work plans of individual units, as well as the corresponding objectives of individual staff members.
Key action 4.4. Establish, in at least three crisis countries, innovative approaches to real-time monitoring of UNDP recovery initiatives, in order to improve accountability to crisis-affected populations and to effectively capture and share lessons learned so as to inform policies.	UNDP applied remote and real-time monitoring in various crisis affected contexts, including Syria and Yemen. Modalities for field monitoring included community-based monitoring, site visits, and third-party monitoring through a private firm or national or international non-governmental organization recruited by UNDP. UNDP Nepal, in partnership with the local team at the Microsoft Innovation Centre, created a mobile application that tracks and coordinates logistics, personnel, and payments, better enabling the Government to administer the rebuilding effort.
	UNDP supported Somalia in developing a monitoring and evaluation database accessible to donors, communities and other partners, providing real-time information on programmes and projects. UNDP Somalia uses a satellite system to remotely monitor areas that are insecure or inaccessible. Somali farmers are using the technology to address climate-related challenges, including increased rainfall variability, floods and droughts.
	In Uganda, UNDP established a system of tracking the savings and household income (from crops) of 12,500 farmers to support economic recovery in rural territories.

Annex 2. Conceptual and evidential link between the vision of UNDP and its work in strategic plan outcome areas

This section illustrates how each of the seven outcomes of the strategic plan maximize the UNDP impact on poverty eradication, and how UNDP efforts add up to more than the sum of their parts.

Outcome 1. Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded

1. *Outcome 1* of the strategic plan recognizes that poverty and inequality reduction require growth that is inclusive and sustainable. In recent decades, progress has been made in the reduction of poverty, but too many have been excluded from reaping the benefits of growth, while others remain vulnerable to setbacks.

2. The UNDP approach to growth that is inclusive and sustainable, as stated in the theory of change, includes: improving the productive capacities of the poor and boosting their prospects for employment and livelihoods; improving capacities for the sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services for expanded employment and livelihoods; implementing inclusive, sustainable solutions to achieve universal modern energy access and greater energy efficiency, low-emissions and climate-resilient development priorities; and supporting innovative options for social protection systems to extend greater protection to poor and at-risk groups from major natural, economic, and conflict-related shocks.

3. Within *outcome 1*, the creation of jobs and livelihoods is among the key UNDP interventions contributing to poverty eradication, with the majority of UNDP country offices (126 countries) contributing to reported results against this work, and an investment of $399 million. In 2014 and 2015, the number of countries able to generate and strengthen employment and livelihoods – thanks to UNDP support – almost doubled[5].

4. One example of a project under this work is in the ***Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia***, where UNDP played a key role in the design and implementation of the national operational plan for labour market services, active employment programmes, and measures that tackle unemployment – one of the major poverty challenges facing the country. The approach targets 35 per cent of registered job seekers in the country (41,026); approximately 12.5 per cent of new private sector jobs and 14 per cent of new businesses created in the country in 2015 were the direct results of this effort.

5. Another important driver of inclusive growth, according to the theory of change of this outcome, is inclusive social protection systems that prevent people from falling into poverty when faced with shocks. UNDP has been increasingly active in assisting governments in designing and implementing inclusive social protection programmes to reduce poverty, exclusion and vulnerability. With UNDP support in 2015, and financing of over $150 million, 53 countries worked on the adoption, expansion and implementation of social protection systems.

6. In ***Mauritius***, for example, UNDP provided direct support for the establishment of the Social Register of Mauritius, with the aim of improving the efficiency of existing social protection programmes and informing the development of new policies for poverty eradication. Through capacity-building in data collection and analysis and inter-ministerial collaboration, UNDP facilitated the registration into the Register of 12,000 of the poorest households. This helped identify 12,000 children to receive a child allowance, and 28,000 who could benefit from free school materials. Since around 50 per cent of the poorest households in the Register are female-headed, it is becoming a powerful tool for not only reaching the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society but also for mitigating gender bias against women in the most poverty-stricken areas.

[5] In 2014, 37 country offices reported supporting countries in achieving "improved policies, systems and/or institutional measures at national and subnational levels to generate and strengthen employment and livelihoods". In 2015, that number jumped to 63 (Integrated Results and Resources Framework).

Outcome 2. Citizens' expectations for voice, development, rule of law and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance

7. UNDP supports partners in building responsive, accountable institutions at all levels of government that have the capacity to respond to the needs of all citizens, particularly the poorest. Recent popular movements around the world have shown that growth alone – without inclusion, justice, voice, accountability, equality and human dignity – can lead to social tensions, citizen insecurity and unrest that undermine the well-being of people. Furthermore, without meaningful inclusion and ownership from the population, progress in poverty reduction can be undone and precipitate crises.

8. *Outcome 2* of the strategic plan highlights that poverty reduction requires effective governance that allows for greater, more equitable and representative voice and participation of all citizens; institutionalizes the rule of law; and promotes and protects the rights of all. The task is more pressing in societies that are particularly vulnerable or polarized due to inequalities and exclusion. *Outcome 2* recognizes is that all social actors have to be included in the collective visioning of society, and systems of democratic governance must have the capacity to respond to citizens' needs and demands.

9. An example of the support provided by UNDP under this outcome is the support for effective, transparent engagement of civil society in national development. This directly addresses recommendation 1 of the evaluation. In 2015 alone, 79 programme countries contributed to facilitating participation of civil society, ensuring that all citizens had voice, as a necessary condition to addressing poverty and exclusion, particularly for those traditionally left behind.

10. Contributing to *outcome 2*, as specified in its theory of change, entails removing the barriers faced by certain groups in accessing participation mechanisms and services. Discrimination and racism are a serious barrier for certain groups in accessing the labour markets and services necessary for the reduction of poverty. Over 20 UNDP country programmes work to fight discrimination and promote inclusive development. In Honduras, for example, to fight discrimination against indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants, UNDP supported a policy against racism and racial discrimination. The policy allowed the country to comply with its international commitments under the 2001 World Conference against Racism. With UNDP support, a human rights unit has been established in the Ministry of Security to train public security forces on human rights issues. Furthermore, the Global Mechanism and National Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, and the Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman), have been equipped with a technically reliable system for tracking complaints about human rights violations.

Outcome 3. Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services

11. The UNDP strategic plan recognizes that poverty reduction cannot be achieved if governments do not have the capacity to provide basic services for all. *Outcome 3* is about strengthening the capacity of institutions to lead the development process and deliver justice, security and other basic services. This capacity includes the ability of institutions to be innovative, encourage collective action at different levels of government, and engage with men, women and communities, including the poorest and most marginalized, equitably, accountably and responsively.

12. In taking this approach, UNDP proposes and advocates for a comprehensive definition of 'basic services' as a basket of integrated services that deliver a minimum set of 'inputs' needed by the poor to build their capabilities, access employment and livelihoods, and live in an environment that is safe and secure, as well as ensure that systems of governance deliver tangible development dividends to the public. 'Basic services' in the strategic plan include: social services, traditionally seen as health, nutrition, education, and water and sanitation; economic services that offer access to higher-quality assets and services, such as natural resources, energy, credit, insurance and social protection; and services related to justice, security and the rule of law that are vital to creating an environment that protects lives, employment, livelihoods and property.

13. The theory of change of *outcome 3* recognizes that this is particularly relevant in post-conflict situations, where the core functions of government need to be restored and enabled to ensure an inclusive recovery process. Between 2014 and 2015, 25 UNDP programme countries worked to restore or strengthen core government functions. For example, in Ebola affected Liberia, to ensure the continuation of health services in the poorest and most vulnerable areas, UNDP established a payments programme for Ebola-response workers. The success of this programme was used to demonstrate the benefits of digital payments and the critical role that a digital ecosystem can play, in fragile contexts, in delivering services efficiently, with increased transparency and development impact. Bolstering this result, UNDP stepped up the roll-out of national implementation, building knowledge and skills among government officials in planning, project implementation, monitoring and management. As a result, 80 per cent of implementing partners now utilize and put into practice the tools and knowledge acquired from UNDP capacity development efforts, boosting government delivery through the application of improved tools and systems and the establishment of a critical mass of experts acting as national implementation champions.

14. The work under *outcome 3* also focuses on strengthening the functions, financing and capacity of subnational-level institutions to deliver basic services and respond to priorities voiced by the public. Seventy-eight country programmes contributed to this work in 2015. In ***Bangladesh***, for example, UNDP innovations and partnerships targeted rural and underprivileged people previously excluded from access to government services by supporting the establishment of 5,340 digital service centres that deliver 53 government services across the poorest rural areas. The electronic filing systems in these centres processed 700,000 public requests; personnel training increased delivery speed by 50 per cent; and travel distances fell from 35 kilometres to 3 kilometres, saving 4.5 million citizens an estimated $500 million in direct and indirect costs.

Outcome 4. Faster progress is achieved in reducing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment.

15. The strategic plan is based on the assumption that sustainable human development will not be fully achieved unless women and girls are empowered to contribute equally with men and boys to their societies. Empowering women and reducing gender gaps in health, education, labour markets, and other areas is associated with greater progress in poverty reduction; higher economic growth; greater agricultural productivity; better nutrition and education of children; and a variety of other positive outcomes. Achieving development goals and results requires accelerated progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.

16. *Outcome 4* of the strategic plan is focused on addressing historical imbalances and specific bottlenecks to gender equality and women's advancement. It reinforces the other outcomes, and each gender-specific output acts as a driver of change to complement the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment throughout.

17. In 2015, 4.7 million women benefited directly from UNDP support to jobs and livelihoods, more than twice as many in 2014 (and exceeding 2015 milestones). UNDP interventions included increasing women's access to credit, assets and productive inputs, and providing vocational training, mentoring and networking activities, including in the field of information and communications technology. In ***Ukraine***, UNDP support led to more than 1.1 million women's benefiting from improved livelihoods. UNDP supported employment, skills training and leadership building for poor women in ***Bangladesh***, enabling more than 200,000 women to be employed or improve their livelihoods, including nearly 4,500 extremely poor women heads of household.

Outcome 5. Countries are able to reduce the likelihood of conflict and decrease the risk of natural disasters, including from climate change

18. The theory of change for *outcome 5* recognizes that the prospect of eradicating poverty and building more inclusive and equitable societies is dependent on the risks to sustained development that regions, countries and societies face. When left unmanaged, risks make countries and societies more susceptible to conflict and crises that impoverish individuals and engender reversals in poverty reduction efforts. Experience demonstrates that building national capacities to anticipate

and mitigate risks – whether natural hazards or conflict-related – should be an integral part of development rather than an ad hoc measure. UNDP work in this area is based on an approach that focuses on preparedness. In 2015, 64 countries (73 country programme outcomes) delivered output level results under outcomes linked to *outcome 5* of the strategic plan.

19. One component of this work involved supporting the establishment of preparedness systems at all levels of government and community to mitigate the consequences of natural hazards and man-made crises for the poor and vulnerable. Forty-seven UNDP programme countries contribute to this work. In ***Rwanda***, for example, UNDP built national and local capacities for disaster risk management to better address disaster and climate threats, and mitigate their impact on the livelihoods of the poor. The 'Risk Atlas' project led by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs, and supported by UNDP, created a disaster risk profile for Rwanda, compiling existing risks at the national and local levels, and collecting baseline data and information on topics such as demography, land cover, climate, and facilities – all of which is expected to generate a clear picture of vulnerabilities across the landlocked country.

Outcome 6. Early recovery and rapid return to sustainable development pathways are achieved in post-conflict and post-disaster settings

20. An underlying objective of all strategic plan outcomes is to build resilient societies that both make progress towards the eradication of poverty and ensure that progress is sustained. Creating employment and livelihoods, improving equitable access to resources and social protection against economic and environmental shocks, and building capacities for democratic governance and peaceful settlement of disputes are critical components for building resilient societies.

21. *Outcome 6* focuses on a crucial dimension of resilience – early recovery from a range of crises, in post-conflict and post-disaster settings. Crises, both natural and man-made, particularly strong affect the lives of the poorest, since they tend to rely disproportionately on natural resources, are more susceptible to increases in prices, work in more precarious environments, and have fewer coping mechanisms to mitigate shocks. This outcomes highlights the UNDP role and the value it adds in ensuring that early recovery is included as part of its humanitarian response, and seizing opportunities to go beyond saving lives to 'building back better'.

22. One key driver of early recovery is early economic revitalization that generates jobs and other environmentally sustainable livelihoods opportunities for crisis-affected poor men and women. Twenty-nine country programmes contributed to this work in 2015, with over 150,000 new emergency jobs created with UNDP support, and over 5 million poor people benefiting from emergency livelihoods. For example, in 2014 and 2015, UNDP Syria contributed to improving the lives of 4.5 million people (direct and indirect beneficiaries) in all governorates, through targeted early recovery and livelihoods restoration efforts, in partnership with more than 150 local actors including non-governmental, community-based and faith-based organizations. This was achieved by rehabilitating community infrastructure and restoring basic services using a labour-intensive approach, where a total of 44,000 emergency employment opportunities were created for internally displaced persons and their host community members, working on solid waste and debris management and quick repairs in affected Syrian governorates. UNDP also facilitated the revival of at least 1,514 business through productive assets replacement, start-up grants, vocational training, job placements, value-chain development and market restoration. The UNDP focus on vulnerable groups provided female-headed households with opportunities to generate their own income, and a comprehensive programme targeting people with disabilities created opportunities for them to integrate in society as productive individuals.

Outcome 7. Development debates and actions at all levels prioritize poverty, inequality and exclusion, consistent with our engagement principles

23. UNDP recognizes that the world is undergoing a profound transformation, which calls for development efforts that are flexible, innovative and responsive to changing realities. Hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty during the past decade, yet hundreds of millions more remain in extreme poverty – and a significant number who have risen from poverty vulnerable to falling back. Inequalities in the many dimensions that constitute well-being are

increasing, while crises experienced in recent years have revealed how fragile hard-won development gains can be –as well as the pervasiveness of risk to the global environment.

24. *Outcome 7* recognizes the UNDP role as a knowledge generator and broker to inform evolving policy debates, ensuring that poverty reduction and its underlying drivers are at the forefront of national and international dialogues. UNDP was a critical partner in ensuring global consensus on the completion the Millennium Development Goals agenda and informing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A key achievement in this area in 2014 and 2015 was the establishment of two crowdsourcing platforms – the ***My World*** survey and ***The World We Want*** – which provided bottom-up inputs to the intergovernmental negotiations, facilitated participation, and provided powerful visualizations for policy advocacy based on live-data evidence. Over 10 million people were able to express their views, and more than 1,000 partners were mobilized in 194 countries. These wide and transparent consultations contributed to shaping the Agenda around the commitment to 'leave no one behind'.

25. The theory of change for *outcome 7* recognizes that new sources of knowledge are emerging strongly in the South and that there are substantial multiplier effects to be tapped through better knowledge-sharing between developing countries. Twenty-three programme countries contributed to South-South and triangular cooperation in 2015. For example, in collaboration with the Rio+ Centre and the ***African Union***, UNDP organized the International Seminar for Social Protection in Africa, which engaged 12 African countries. The seminar drew high level contributions from ***Brazil***, the African Union, academics, and United Nations partners, and helped broaden the concept of social protection as it applies to Africa; facilitated the exchange of experiences between Brazil and Africa; and agreed upon a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening social protection in the region. Those recommendations informed African Union processes and an African Union Executive Council decision (Johannesburg, June 2015).

Annex 3. Illustrative list of UNDP publications, guidelines and tools illustrating and enabling approaches that maximize poverty reduction impacts

Empowering the poor: experience from UNDP-supported initiatives on adaptation, 2015, stresses that adaptation to climate change and poverty reduction must be addressed simultaneously.

Towards green and inclusive prosperity: building green economies that deliver on poverty reduction, 2015, draws on a range of country experiences and a series of case studies to inform country-led efforts to transition to greener, more inclusive economies in ways that deliver on poverty reduction.

Integrated planning and sustainable development: challenges and opportunities, 2016, illustrates the sustainable development pathways that countries are pursuing and highlights the need for integrated, coherent and inclusive development and green economy solutions that reduce poverty and advance the 2030 Agenda.

Guide on development approaches to migration and displacement, 2015, focuses on addressing migration and displacement through sustainable development, including the alleviation of poverty and vulnerability among displaced persons, migrants and host communities.

Guidelines on livelihoods and economic recovery in (post-) crisis contexts, 2013, including examples of integrated programmes that promote social cohesion, while advancing local development and generating and strengthening livelihoods.

3x6 toolkit, 2016, documents a step-by-step approach for sustainable economic reintegration and improving livelihoods of the vulnerable and poor after a crisis.

Crisis response packages on debris management, community 9nfrastructure rehabilitation and municipal solid waste management, 2015, and emergency employment, enterprise recovery are a comprehensive set of project tools to be used in crisis response to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable as part of broader recovery efforts.

Guidance note on cash-based interventions (under finalization, forthcoming in 2016) takes specific account of risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities for those most vulnerable.

Primer on social protection for sustainable development (forthcoming in 2016) articulates how social protection can play a transformative role in poverty reduction and the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Multidimensional progress: well-being beyond income – Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2016, explores the determinants of poverty reduction as well as the risks of falling back into poverty from a multidimensional lens.

Poverty, inequality and vulnerability in the transition and developing economies of Europe and Central Asia, 2014, ties changing trends to issues of vulnerability, exclusion, and sustainability.

Mainstreaming environment and climate for poverty reduction and sustainable development, 2015, elaborates on approaches that have worked to maximize poverty reduction and environmental objectives.

UNDP social and environmental standards, 2015, state the principles with regard to social and environmental safeguards that all UNDP programmes must apply.

Addendum to the Millennium Development Goals country report guidelines, 2013, updates the guidance to help countries – in addition to their regular reporting on progress and challenges – reflect on their experiences in implementing the Goals.

Humanity divided: confronting inequality in developing countries, 2013, analyses inequalities in both income and opportunities and offers an integrated policy framework to address them.